A

SERMON

Preached at the

TEMPLE-CHURCH,

ON

Sunday, the 18th of *February*, 1^{699}_{700}.

By *WILLIAM STEPHENS*, B. D.
And Rector of *Sutton* in *Surrey*.

LONDON,
Sold by *A. Baldwin* at the *Oxford-Arms* in *Warwick lane*, 1700.

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WILLIAM STEPHENS, B.D.
And Rector of Cuddington Surrey.

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ROM. 12. 10.

Be kindly affectioned one to another with Brotherly love.——

WHoever caſts his eye upon the viſible World, with an intention to make any Remarks thereupon, will at firſt ſight diſcover, that an univerſal Benevolence inſpirits the whole of it: foraſmuch as all its parts are ſo ordered, as to be mutually beneficial to one another. By the things which are within our view, we ſee a Power, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, whereof we can diſcover no Bounds; and hence we raiſe our Thoughts to the Contemplation of a Deity, by a joint Idea of Supreme Power, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs. But that which every day's experience does in a more particular manner convince us of, is, that all things conſpire to-

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gether for the uſe of humane kind; as if the grand deſign of the Creation were to render the World beneficial to Man, not only by yielding to us the Means which are neceſſary to ſupport our Beings, but likewiſe affording us inſtruction in what manner we ſhould demean our ſelves to each other, by a conſtant inclination to be mutually aſſiſtant to one another, as all things conſpire together to be ſerviceable to us. I would not be ſo underſtood, as if the whole Creation of God were deſigned for no other purpoſe beſides its uſefulneſs to Mankind, who dwell upon this Earth. This conſideration ſeems too narrow to comprize the deſign of a Deity in the contrivance of the Univerſe; and the vaſt Syſtems of Nature contained therein may be ſerviceable to each other beyond our Imagination. Yet in all things which do come to our Knowledge, we perceive a fitneſs and ſuitableneſs to our own benefit, though it may not be excluſive of other ends. And God having made Mankind in ſuch a manner, as that they ſtand in need of each others help; and likewiſe ſo as to be poſſeſs'd of thoſe abilities which are ſuited to the needs

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of one another, has thereby, as well as by the diſpoſition of the Univerſe, admoniſhed us (as does the Text) *to be kindly affectioned to one another with brotherly love.*

The duty recommended to us in the Text, is Kindneſs to one another, which needs not explication (but only practice) nature having ſufficiently explain'd it to every man's capacity; there being no man in the uſe of his reaſon, but knows when he is uſed kindly, and when unkindly treated. And he who knows what it is to receive a kindneſs, cannot be ignorant what it is to do one. A courteſie received is the ſame with a kindneſs done.

Having therefore no occaſion to explain, I ſhall make it my preſent buſineſs to ſet forth the obligation which God has laid us under, in order to the practice of this great duty both from the Syſtems of Nature and Scripture.

1. The Law of Nature is the Will of God, as it is made evident to us by all that appears in the World. 'Tis Things, not Words, which reveal his Will (by the way of Nature) ſo

far as it concerns our duty. Thus, as the *Heavens which declare the glory of God*, do even thereby enjoyn us a reverence for the Deity. So both Heavens and Earth declaring the love of God by adminiſtring conſtant Supplies of Joy and Comfort to us, enjoyn us to *be kindly affectioned to one another.*

If we conſider Man in the ſtate of natural Life, we ſhall find all men to be fellow-members of one Body: and *as the eye cannot ſay to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you*, as St. *Paul* reaſons, 1 *Cor.* 12. 21. So no man can aſſure himſelf that he has no need of either this or that other man. From the variety which is in humane life, one may reaſonably conclude, that there is not any man to whom he is known, but in a few years may have it in his power to do him ſome conſiderable benefit or injury. 'Twould make a large Collection from Hiſtory, to lay together the Inſtances in which the Beaſts are reported to have been in an extraordinary manner beneficial to men lying under ſevere Exigencies. But the uſefulneſs of Man to Man fills the

the Volume of humane Nature, which paſſes thro' all Ages, and is too great for Hiſtory. Where mutual Wants and mutual Supplies appear at the ſame time together, the Will of God is thereby declared, that they ought to be joined together. For no man can doubt, but what is fit to be done ſhould be done. And this conſideration the old *Stoic* Philoſophers took for the foundation of all Moral Virtue, which they ſtiled in their uſual Diſcourſes, τὸ πρέπον, τὸ καθῆκον, *The thing which is fit to be done.* And hereby it appears, that although Moral Virtues do not admit of the ſame manner of Demonſtration with Mathematical Concluſions; yet Moral Duties admit of Demonſtrations as clear and undoubted as the other. If I plainly diſcover the wants of my fellow-creature, and my own abilities to ſpare him relief, the duty of the Text is demonſtrated, *viz.* that I ought to be kindly affectioned to him. Here's a wounded man, and here's a ſpare Plaiſter at hand fitted for the Wound, can any man doubt whether it ſhould be laid to it? And if men do not act according to this plain Law of Nature, 'tis not becauſe they have any doubt or diſſatisfaction con-

concerning their duty; but being free Agents (without which freedom they could not be virtuous) a Moral Demonſtration cannot conſtrain them to action. But if the greater part of Mankind, with whom we converſe, do not perform the Obligations of Nature in the duty of ſhewing kindneſs to others, that very Obſervation is another Demonſtration to us, that we ſhould double our diligence in doing all the good we can, to ſupply the defects which we ſee in others; as in the humane body it ſometimes happens, that ſome of the ſenſes make good the Deficiency of others.

It may not be beſide the matter in hand to obſerve, that although Rewards and Puniſhments are proper motives to diſcourage vice, and ſtir us up to virtuous actions; yet neither the one nor the other are any Moral Demonſtrations of what we ought to do in this caſe. For my duty of Kindneſs to another does not ariſe either from Hopes or Fears, but merely form my Conſciouſneſs of another man's Wants in conjunction with my own Abilities to relieve him. If my Kindneſs to

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another ariſes merely from Hopes of Reward, 'tis Mercenary; if from Fear, 'tis Cowardice; if it ariſes from the conſideration of the caſe as it lies before me, and moves me to pity, 'tis virtuous Compaſſion and Charity, 'tis kind Affection.

For from the Stile of the Text 'tis plain, that the virtue of Charity which comprehends all our duty to one another, is founded in our inward Affections towards one another. And generally Men are eſteemed good or ill, as they ſtand affected to one another. If 'tis by Chance and not Choice that I do many good turns to another, I have not thereby gained the right of being ſtiled a good Man. But I am therefore a good Man, becauſe my Affections are conſtantly ſet upon doing good Offices. If a man be inclined to do good turns to another from the motive of advantage to himſelf; this temper of Mind cannot be called good Nature amongſt Men, much leſs can it be thought a virtue amongſt Chriſtians. But here I except the advantage of confirming a habit of virtue by every good action we perform. 'Tis no Dero-

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gation from my Virtue, that I desire to be made more perfect in it: as 'tis no diminution to my kind Affection towards others to desire that it may receive a daily increase.

And hereupon it is, that the great Reward which the Christian hopes for, does not diminish ought from the virtuous actions which he performs in expectation thereof, because the Christian's Heaven (when duly considered) is nothing more than that Happiness which arises from Virtue in its highest Perfection. And indeed every Man is sensible in this life, that as his vertuous Affections increase in him, so does the pleasure he enjoys in reflecting upon what he has done; and so does his Resolution to persevere in well-doing increase. And as it is no unbecoming motive to proceed in doing good Offices to others upon the prospect of increasing our kind Affection towards others, or advancing the pleasure of being conscious thereof; so the prospect of Heaven, which is an eternal confirmation of all good Affections in conjunction with the highest Delight and Satisfaction there-

therein, does not give the tincture of Mercenary to any Chriſtian Virtue which ariſes from thence. This is no more than to love Virtue for its own ſake. For as he who loves Money for its own ſake, ſhews that ſordid Affection by a conſtant endeavour to improve all opportunities which ſerve him to add more ſumms to his heap; ſo he who loves Virtue for its own ſake, diſcovers that laudable diſpoſition of Mind, by taking all advantages of doing good, whereby he encreaſes the ſtock of his Virtue. He who *gives all diligence to add to his Faith, Virtue; and to Virtue, Knowledge; and to Knowledge, Temperance; and to Temperance, Patience; and to Patience, Godlineſs; and to Godlineſs, Brotherly Kindneſs; and to Brotherly Kindneſs, an univerſal Charity*, or Love to all Mankind, does hereby make it out, that he is a Lover of every thing that is good for Goodneſs-ſake. That which makes a man's purſuit after Virtue baſe and mercenary, is when the Reward propoſed is of any other ſort and kind than Virtue it ſelf. To do good turns to others for my own private gain, is not to be kindly affection'd to others, but a deſire of gain to my ſelf. To do

good Offices for others out of deſire to gain the praiſe of Men, is Phariſaical Pride and Hypocriſie: but to be always pleaſed with an Opportunity and Ability of doing good to another, is to be kindly affectioned, which is to do good for Goodneſs-ſake, to love Virtue for Virtue's ſake.

Now as the Syſtem of Nature points forth to us the occaſions and reaſons of exerciſing this Virtue; ſo it ſets forth to us the *Extent* of our Duty. Be kindly affectioned to one another, that is, according to the Syſtem of Nature, to all Men as Men. He is not a good Man, who is not a lover of Mankind: for by the ſame manner as we diſcover that other things are made for us, we alſo know, that we are made for one another; by the ſame reaſon by which I know that Graſs was made for the Horſe to eat, and that the Horſe was made for man to ride; ſo do I diſcover, that the ſtrong was made to protect the weak, that the wiſe was made to adviſe the fooliſh, and that Men are made rich to ſupply the Wants of the Needy. And this laſt Notion accounts for the *Jewiſh* Stile, in which

which Language, Alms are called Righteouſneſs, as *Prov.* 10. 2. *The treaſures of wickedneſs profit nothing, but righteouſneſs delivers from death.* According whereunto, *Daniel* adviſed *Nebuchadnezzar, to break off his ſins by righteouſneſs, and his iniquities by ſhewing mercy to the poor,* Dan. 4. 27. So in the 112. *Pſal. v.* 9. *He has diſperſed, he has given to the poor, his righteouſneſs endureth for ever*; i. e. his Bounty ſhall procure him God's Bleſſing for ever. Agreeable hereunto, Mr. *J. Gregory*, a very learned Critic informs us, that whereas in *Mat.* 6. 2. our preſent Copies read, Προσέχετε τὴν ἐλεημοσύνην ὑμῶν, &c. *Do not your Alms before men*, &c. (he ſays) very ancient Copies have it, Προσέχετε τὴν δικαιοσύνην, &c. *Take heed that you do not your righteouſneſs before men.* Hence the poor man's box by the *Jews* was called the box of righteouſneſs; and the Author of the Book of *Tobit*, repeating the forecited Verſe of *Solomon*, ſays, *Alms deliver from death.* Nay the Mammon of unrighteouſneſs in our Saviour's ſenſe, is Charity with-held from thoſe to whom it is due.

According to the Syſtem of Nature, I have a right to the good Affection of all Mankind; and every man elſe has the ſame right with me. Foraſmuch as every man's wants do in ſuitable proportion entitle him to the aſſiſtance of every other man's Abilities, as opportunity ſhall ſerve.

Beſides, this duty of kind Affection is attach'd to all the Offices of humane life, wherein we have any dealing with one another; it ought to rule in all our intercourſes. And by comparing his action with this rule, any one may know, whether he be an honeſt man or not. He who has a reſpect to the benefit of others, at leaſt as much as to his own profit, may know himſelf to be an honeſt man in all his dealings with the world. For according to this rule I am obliged as much to aſſiſt the Buyer, as to endeavour my own gain by the bargain. So that no advantage can be drawn from any man's Ignorance; and a Child may deal with an honeſt Tradeſman, as well as one of years and knowledge. Thus 'tis in all Profeſſions, as thoſe of Phyſick and Law; the honeſt Doctor has his Mind chiefly

ly bent upon reſtoring his Patient's health, the honeſt Lawyer is more intent upon his Client's Cauſe, than upon the Fees which he expects to receive: And the honeſt Parſon has a greater regard to the Flock than the Fleece. Thus if we conſider Mankind in a ſtate of Nature, they are far from being in a ſtate of War, but are engaged in kind Affection and Compaſſion to *do ſervice to one another*.

If we proceed to conſider men as they are joyn'd together in civil Societies, under the Government of Sovereign or Inferiour Powers, the duty of kind affection ſtill does oblige the Superiour to the Inferiour, and ſo backwards. And this mutual Obligation ariſes from the mutual neceſſities and advantages by which both Superiours and Inferiours ſtand related to one another. 'Tis manifeſt, that the King himſelf is ſerved by the Plow, as well as that the Plow-man is protected by the King: but the King's obligation to the Plow-man, in this caſe ſtands only upon the foot of natural neceſſity. The deſign of Civil Government is mutual Defence and Protection; in which it appears, that the duty of kind Affection obliges

liges both Rulers and People: and as the Rulers are above the People in their Places and Stations, ſo their duty of being kindly affectioned to their Subjects, is in Nature precedent to the Obligation their Subjects bear towards them. For a people in raiſing any one Man to the Sovereign Adminiſtration of the Laws, have thereby obliged the King to act for their behoof chiefly. And the Allegiance which they bear to their King is in order of Nature ſubſequent hereunto. We have no reaſon to honour or reſpect him in any-wiſe, but becauſe he governs us for our behoof. And as the natural Abilities which any man has obtain'd, lay an obligation upon him to improve them for the good of all men: ſo the Political Abilities which conſiſt chiefly in legal Power and Pre-eminence confer'd on him by the People, do lay upon the Prince a like Obligation to imploy them for the uſe of thoſe who confer'd them upon him: and the good Adminiſtration of the Prince does likewiſe engage a people to *give Tribute to whom Tribute is due, Cuſtom to whom Cuſtom, Fear to whom Fear, and Honour to whom Honour.*

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So that hereby, every Magiſtrate may know if he diſchargeth the duty of the Text in the execution of his Political Function, *viz.* if his inclination be to ſhew kindneſs to his people, at leaſt, as much as to receive benefit from them. 'Tis this Affection from whence *David* took occaſion to ſtile Sovereign Princes by the name of Gods, and the contrary Affection gave *Solomon* a reaſon to compare others to Lions and Bears, *Prov.* 28. 15. *As a roaring Lion and a ranging Bear, ſo is a wicked ruler over the poor people.* And on the other hand, the peoples duty to a good Prince, is but Retaliation of the ſame kind Affection he ſhews to them.

Hitherto I have endeavoured to recommend the Virtue ſet forth in the Text from the Syſtem of Nature, taking into it the reaſon of Civil Societies, which are grounded upon natural Foundations. The ſumm of what has been ſaid, is, if we conſider Mankind in its own natural Conſtitution, or as it is united into Civil Societies, the great deſign both of the Natural and Civil State of men is to perform

form the duty of the Text, *to be kindly affectioned one to another with Brotherly love.* I will conclude this head with an uſual ſaying of a Reverend Divine of this City, Dr. *Whitchcot*, viz. *Knowledge and Wiſdom in the Mind are Goodneſs in the Will and Choice.* He who knows what is the condition of Man, will know what good uſe he ought to make of it.

2. I proceed now to ſet forth our Obligations to mutual Kindneſs from the Syſtem of holy Scripture. And if both Teſtaments conſpire together chiefly in ſetting forth the infinite love of God to the whole World in contriving and performing the Redemption of Man by Jeſus Chriſt; and if the Goſpels be chiefly an Hiſtory of theſe *labours of love* which our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt moſt willingly undertook, conſtantly underwent both in Life and Death, and at laſt joyfully accompliſhed in his Reſurrection; Muſt we not from hence conclude with St. *John*'s firſt Epiſtle, *ch.* 4. *v.* 11. *Beloved, if God ſo loved us, we ought alſo to love one another?* And ought we not to hearken to St. *Paul*, Eph. 5. 1, 2. *Be ye therefore followers of God as dear Children, and walk in love,*

love as Chriſt alſo hath loved us, and hath given himſelf for us, an offering and a ſacrifice to God, for a ſweet ſmelling ſavour.

Add to this the wonderfull things which in the Holy Scriptures are ſpoken of Charity, as,

Firſt, The Covering of Sins, 1 *Pet.* 4. 8. *Above all things, have fervent Charity among your ſelves: for Charity ſhall cover a multitude of Sins.* Here a *lex talionis* is executed with rigour of kindneſs, for as Charity teaches us to cover the faults of one another, ſo it procures of God a covering for our own ſins; and *bleſſed is the man whoſe ſins are covered*, Pſal. 32. 1. This bleſſing is aſſur'd by Chriſt in the plaineſt words to Charity, *Mat.* 6. 14. *If ye forgive men their treſſpaſſes, your heavenly Father will alſo forgive you.*

Secondly, 'Tis ſtiled the *fulfilling of the Law*, Rom. 13. 10. All Laws, both Divine and Humane, aim at this great end, *viz.* That Mankind may live well one with another; which is brought to paſs, by obſerving the

duty of the Text, *in being kindly affectioned to one another with brotherly love.*

Thirdly, 'Tis called the life of Faith, *Jam.* 2. 26. *As the Body without the Spirit is dead, ſo Faith without Works is dead alſo.* A Believer, without good Affections, is a dead Chriſtian, a Chriſtian good for nothing.

Fourthly, To this Virtue are annexed the Bleſſings of this life, *Prov.* 22. 9. *He that hath a bountifull eye ſhall be bleſſed.* Which Bleſſings are more fully ſet forth by *David*, Pſal. 41. 1, 2. *Bleſſed is he who conſiders the Poor, the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble; the Lord will preſerve him, and keep him alive; and he ſhall be bleſſed upon the earth, and thou wilt not deliver him into the will of his enemies.*

Sixthly, Hereunto are alſo annexed the Rewards of that life which is to come, in the great day, when Jeſus Chriſt ſhall judge the world, every man's cauſe will come to an iſſue and final determination upon the great point of kind Affection and brotherly Love,

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Mat. 25. 34, &c. *Then ſhall the King ſay unto them of his right hand, Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye cloathed me; I was ſick, and ye viſited me; I was in priſon, and ye came unto me.* And how highly the performance of ſuch good offices to our Brethren is approved by Jeſus Chriſt, the following words declare, *Verily,* (ſays he) *in as much as ye have done it to one of the leaſt of theſe my Brethren, ye have done it to me,* v. 40. The kindneſs which is ſhewn to the Flock muſt needs be well received by the Shepherd: ſo the Head partakes of the benefit which any Member of the Body receives; and the Vine cannot but be concern'd in the well or ill uſage of the Branches.

Seventhly, 'Tis this kind Affection whereby we can come to the neareſt conformity to the example of our great and good Maſter, who was eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, life to the dead; who was born for us, liv'd and

dy'd for us, aroſe again for us, and ſtill liveth to intercede at the right hand of the Father for us.

Eighthly, 'Tis the mark by which we diſcern whether we have paſſed from a ſtate of death to a ſtate of life, 1 *Joh.* 3. 14. *We know that we have paſſed from death to life, becauſe we love the brethren; he that loveth not his brother abideth in death.* Like a dead body which has loſt the uſe of its ſenſes, ſo is he, who for want of kind Affection does not ſee the opportunities of exerciſing brotherly Love, which God's good Providence frequently preſents to him, whoſe ears do not hear the complaints of the poor and diſtreſſed, who has no fellow-feeling of his Brother's infirmities or miſeries, and muſt therefore be without that delightfull reliſh which every good man taſts in the ſelf-conſciouſneſs and feeling of his own virtue.

Ninthly, 'Tis the mark whereby we diſcern, if we bare any love to God or not, 1 *Joh.* 4. 16. *God is love, and he that dwelleth in*

in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. And v. 20. he teacheth thus, *If a man ſay, I love God and hateth his Brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his Brother, whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God, whom he hath not ſeen?* The Apoſtle putting the ſtreſs of his Argument upon theſe words, *His Brother whom he hath ſeen,* ſuggeſts to us, that there are ſome ſort of Arguments, which move us to the love of our Brother, which cannot be applied to induce us to the love of God; and ſuch are all the motives to Charity, which are obvious to our eyes or indeed any of our ſenſes; but who hath ſeen God at any time? And who by the eye of reaſon or light of holy Scripture, can diſcern any thing in his eternal ſtate of incomprehenſible perfections, and infinite happineſs, that may move us to Pity and Compaſſion? But we have ſeen our Brother naked, we have heard his Complaints: Hunger, and Thirſt, and Diſgrace, and Pain in our Brother is the ſame with what we feel in our ſelves. And if the melancholy Scene of our Brother's miſeries in a lively manner repreſented to our outward Senſes, cannot through

thoſe inlets of the Soul reach our Hearts, and touch us with a compaſſionate reſentment of his Calamity; what pretence have we even to life it ſelf? Much leſs to love the firſt begotten of life; for whoſe ſake life it ſelf was beſtowed upon the duſt of the earth, when it was quickned with humane Soul.

Tenthly; What ſhall I ſay! Wonderfull are the Praiſes which are given to this great Virtue through the whole Book of God: But what can be greater than theſe two Encomiums, with which I ſhall conclude?

1. 'Tis eſteem'd to be the body of Religion, ſo ſays St. *John*, 13. 35. *By this ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples, if ye have love one for another*. And this was the body of Divinity which St. *John* preached; as appears by his Epiſtles which are ſpirited with the duty of kind Affection. And will further be manifeſted from a relation which St. *Hierom* makes concerning St. *John*'s laſt diſcharge of his Evangelical Office; for being very old and infirm, and unable to preach to his Congrega-

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tion at *Epheſus* as he was wont, he would yet be led conſtantly to them, although he had not ſtrength to ſay any more words, than *Little Children love one another.* And when his Auditors, wearied with the conſtant repetition of the ſame thing, asked him, Why he always ſpake the ſame; he anſwered, becauſe it was the command of our Lord, and that if they did nothing elſe, this alone was enough.

2. And as it is eſteem'd the body of Chriſtian Religion, ſo 'tis reckon'd as the top of all Chriſtian Virtues, as St. *Paul* teaches, 1 *Cor.* 13.1,2,3. *Though I ſpeak with the tongues of Men, and of Angels, and have not Charity, I am become as a ſounding braſs and as a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of Prophecy, and underſtand all myſteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, ſo that I could remove mountains, and have no Charity, I am nothing. And though I beſtow all my goods to feed the poor; and though I give my body to be burned, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing.*

Finally,

Finally, If you lay both the parts of this Discourse together, the conclusion of the whole matter will be this; Kindness of Affection is the true beauty of the World, the Ornament of Man, and the Glory of a Christian. Which God grant to us all through him, who loved us and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood. *Amen.*

FINIS.